

VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION CONFERENCE

October 27, 2005

The Role Local Government Can Play In Program Delivery

**Fred Whitley, P.E.
City Engineer**

City of Hampton

Two Approaches For Local Government Involvement In Program Delivery

State Administration – Localities may prefer this when projects are:

- Too expensive (financial burden)
- Too complicated (staff expertise/availability)
- Too controversial (political hot potato)

Local Administration - “First Cities Initiative” – Full Responsibility
For Administration of Program

- Cities of Hampton, Richmond, Virginia Beach signed on July 1, 2004
- City of Charlottesville signed on July 1, 2005
- City of Harrisonburg, Town of Bridgewater will sign on July 1, 2006

State Administration Local Role/Responsibility

- Localities have a responsibility to understand “hot button issues” on projects and to communicate this to VDOT
- Localities should be an active participant in decision making processes and not just weigh in after decision is made
- Local governing bodies should “circle the wagons” with VDOT when projects get controversial and look at greater good, not cater to special interest groups
- Localities should develop staff/improve understanding of VDOT processes and monitor project as closely as possible

Local Administration First Cities Initiative

"TOP FIVE" REASONS WHY THE CITY OF HAMPTON TOOK OVER ITS URBAN CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

- 1) City staff was already locally administering many of the VDOT projects and has experience in project management
- 2) VDOT makes advance quarterly payments (\$8.2m in FY05, including prior year allocations)
- 3) With advance funding comes flexibility to address greatest needs as local priorities change
- 4) VDOT staff time charges to projects are reduced thereby decreasing overhead and increasing funds for construction
- 5) City staff has vested interest in schedules, quality and cost control on design and construction of projects (closer to the customer)

Other Considerations for Local Government Involvement in Program Delivery

- Local governments have more options for transportation funding – bonding, special tax districts, developer contributions
- Local governments control land use decisions which may impact transportation plans
- Are all localities able to manage procurements/contract administration of consultants and contractors for transportation projects?
- Federal funding % is increasing in Urban construction program – can localities (who are locally administering) handle the rules and regulations?
- Creates a management problem for VDOT and a risk for localities

Lessons Learned In First Year of Local Program Management

- Opened “window” into VDOT’s world of project/program management processes
- All parties recognize the need for more streamlining of processes where possible
- Increasing federal funding in Urban Construction program means more “i” dotting/“t” crossing
- Get person on staff to become local “expert” on VDOT/FHWA processes
- VDOT has done an outstanding job of managing this “turnover” process to local governments under the First Cities Initiative

Role of Local Government In Program Delivery

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

- Training, training, training of localities – in project management, cost estimating system, federal requirements
- Continuing shift of decision making from Central office to Districts in order to accelerate VDOT approvals of local projects
- Enhanced design and construction guidance documents from VDOT
- Continue to foster relationships and communications between localities and VDOT – we are all in this together, as partners, to **Keep Virginia Moving**

GO HOKIES

BEAT B.C.

